

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT:	Y. Okamoto et al.	CONF. NO.:	8151
U.S. SERIAL NO:	10/671,254	EXAMINER:	P. Dhingra
FILED:	September 24, 2003	GROUP:	2625
FOR:	IMAGE PROCESSING DEVICE AND IMAGE PROCESSING METHOD		

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
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Sir:

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Applicants are in receipt of the Office Action dated December 24, 2008 of the above-referenced application. Applicants respond to the Office Action as follows.

Claims 1-8 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,285,459 to Koakutsu et al. ("Koakutsu") in view of Japanese Publication 09-284572 (referred to as "Tokukaihei"), further in view of U.S. Patent 6,745,334 to Ikegami. Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, further in view of Ikegami, further in view of "well known art." These rejections are respectfully traversed.

On page 5 of the Office Action of 12/24/2008, it was admitted that the Koakutsu reference does not teach or suggest that a request for suspension of an invalidation/deletion being performed is permitted "after a predetermined code is inputted to confirm that a user who requested the suspension of the invalidation is a certified user," where the invalidation/deletion

"being performed cannot be suspended unless approved by the certified user by entry of the predetermined code," as recited in independent claim 1 (*see also* independent claim 5).

On page 5, last paragraph to page 6, first paragraph of the Office Action of 12/24/2008, step S195 of FIG. 19, the abstract, and column 15, lines 30-38 of Ikegami were cited as allegedly corresponding to the above claim limitation.

As described in the abstract of Ikegami, "personal box areas" of an image memory are allocated to individuals, where each personal box area is associated with a name and a first password or a second password. In the event of deletion of a personal box area, the first password is consulted if registered; if the first password is not registered, then the second password is consulted to determine whether deletion is authorized (see abstract of Ikegami).

FIG. 19 of Ikegami is a flow chart depicting a procedure for deleting a personal box. FIG. 19 is described with reference to column 12, line 65 to column 13, line 17 of Ikegami. According to the deletion procedure depicted in FIG. 19 of Ikegami, in step S191, it is determined whether a first password has been registered, and if registered, the operator is prompted to enter a password, which is compared to the first password (step S193) (see column 13, lines 1-5 of Ikegami). If the first password is unregistered, then the entered password is compared with the second password (step S192) (see column 13, lines 5-8 of Ikegami). If the entered password matches either the first or second passwords, then the personal box corresponding to the password is deleted (see column 13, lines 9-17 of Ikegami).

In other words, in Ikegami, a password is registered in advance, so as to require password authentication before performing maintenance of a personal box assigned to an individual (e.g., deletion, change of name), so that unauthorized persons cannot perform the maintenance.

Ikegami does not teach or suggest suspension of an invalidation/deletion process that is in execution. Ikegami also does not relate to an invalidation/deletion process that is given priority over another process.

In summary, Ikegami simply does not teach or suggest that **suspension of an invalidation/deletion being performed** is permitted in response to a request of the suspension of the invalidation/deletion by entry of a predetermined code.

Instead, Ikegami relates to an arrangement for preventing unauthorized deletion of a personal box by using a password. In Ikegami, the password is registered in advance for each personal box, so that the password is used to determine whether to delete the personal box.

Even if a personal box of Ikegami is somehow considered "image data" to be invalidated, the deletion of the image data would require registering and setting in advance passwords for the respective pieces of image data (personal boxes). In contrast, independent claims 1 and 5 require entry of a predetermined code to confirm that a user requesting suspension of an invalidation is a certified user.

Also, even if a personal box of Ikegami is considered "image data," Ikegami merely teaches the deletion of the personal box associated with the password, but does not teach or suggest **suspension of the invalidation/deletion** as claimed.

Further, Ikegami does not require password authentication for the printing process. Therefore, Ikegami does not teach or suggest that password authentication is necessary in order to carry out "urgent data processing."

Therefore, even if Ikegami was somehow combined with Koakutsu in view of Tokukaihei, the proposed combination would not result in the Applicants' claimed invention, at least because Ikegami merely discloses password-protected deletion of a personal box, and thus could only modify Koakutsu to require entry of a matching password prior to deletion. Ikegami simply does not teach or suggest that **suspension of the invalidation/deletion** could somehow be controlled via password protection.

Further, even if the preset password for a personal box, as disclosed in Ikegami, is considered a "predetermined code," the password does not relate to the status of a user as a "certified user" as claimed. In other words, in Ikegami, the password relates to a personal box, and does not indicate the user's status as a "certified user."

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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